



AETC News Clips

Randolph AFB, Texas



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Timing is everything for new Brooks 'facilitator'

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Sig Christenson
Express-News Military Writer

The agency that runs Brooks City-Base introduced a new CEO on Tuesday who vows to raise the profile of the installation as the Air Force prepares to make its exit.

Donald Jakeway's problem, though, is that the Air Force may well take its sweet time leaving Brooks, preventing the commercial firms he hopes to attract from moving into some valuable real estate. The federal funding needed to move Air Force missions to other installations is uncertain.

"As much as I appreciate the Air Force — especially the science mission — they're lame-duck tenants for an indefinite length of time," said former Mayor Howard Peak, chairman of the Brooks Development Authority, which oversees the 1,246-acre property.

"The problem with that is Brooks isn't going to be able to serve as the magnet of other scientific activities," Peak said.

Seven months after Brooks was one of 21 installations ordered to shutter by the 2005 base closure commission, questions have arisen about whether there will be enough money to move missions such as Brooks' 311th Human Systems Wing to Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio.

The commission said \$21 billion would be needed to shift all the missions, while the Defense Department now has \$12.5 billion.

Phil Grone, deputy undersecretary of defense for installations and environment, last week told a Senate panel there was enough money for 2006 and 2007, but did not say if the government could adequately fund the shift of missions through Sept. 15, 2011, the deadline set by the closure commission.

Peak fears that missions will remain on Brooks up to or even after the deadline because of the coming federal budget crunch and the possibility of a BRAC funding shortfall.



Nicole Frufé/Express-News
Donald Jakeway mingles Tuesday after being introduced as the new CEO of the Brooks Development Authority. Jakeway takes the helm as the timetable and federal funding to relocate Brooks Air Force missions are uncertain.

It isn't an isolated concern. Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Sue E. Turner, a base closure commissioner from San Antonio, said: "Some of the projected moves require a significant amount of construction, and the questions about funding for those are good questions. I don't have the answer."

The Brooks Development Authority's former interim executive director, Alex Briseño, said officials are working with the Air Force to find buildings that can be given to the authority, but he couldn't say how

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much the Air Force's footprint might shrink. One Senate staffer said no one yet knows if there's enough money for BRAC, but cautioned against "hysteria."

The handover hassles complicate Jakeway's job as the authority's new leader because the Air Force is renting 85 percent of the 2.2 million square feet on Brooks for \$10.1 million this year. That's half of what Peak thinks the authority could get from private firms. The authority's budget this year is \$37.5 million, with the city contributing \$3.2 million, two-thirds for the base's major thoroughfare.

Brooks is perhaps the town's hottest property. It boasts nearly a dozen private and municipal tenants and has a 62-acre "commercial corner" under construction. The site off Goliad Road and Southwest Military Drive is taking shape, with a Wal-Mart Supercenter, Sam's Club, Best Buy and Office Depot anchoring it.

DPT Laboratories will join the list of tenants in May when it completes a 30,000-square-foot research and development facility and a 224,000-square-foot warehouse. Groundbreaking for a \$24.5 million San Antonio/Bexar County Emergency Operations Center is set for summer, and talks are under way to build a Baptist Health Systems hospital. It would start at 175 beds and rise to as many as 400 over time, and would include up to seven professional buildings.

"The exciting thing when you're in that part of town is the incredible amount of growth there, the fact that Sam's and Wal-Mart are going in has brought all those other businesses," said retired Air Force Brig. Gen. John G. Jernigan, a former Brooks commander.

At 57, Jakeway enters the fray armed with experience as former chief of the Michigan Economic Development Corp. and the Ohio Department of Development. He described himself as a "great troubleshooter" and "facilitator," but capitalizing on the Air Force's transition to new locales will require one key element.

"All I can tell you is the success of economic development and what happens with the Air Force backing down," Jakeway said after his introduction, "is that we have to have something that will take its place."

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Wesp

03/22/2006

Brigadier General Joseph E. Wesp M.D. passed away Sunday March 19, 2006 at the age of 81. Funeral services are scheduled for 12:00 PM Friday March 24, 2006 at Sunset Funeral Home Chapel with Fr. William Benish officiating. Interment will follow at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery. Visitation will be Thursday March 23, 2006 6:00 - 8:00 PM at the Funeral Home. Sunset Funeral Home.



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Air Force Times



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Keesler rebuilding continues

Associated Press

BILOXI, Miss. — Student training enrollment at Keesler Air Force Base has returned to pre-Hurricane Katrina size just seven months into a projected three-year plan for restoration — one of several signs that base operations are on the way to normalcy, officials said.

The base has about 3,400 students, said Lt. Col. Shane Courvill, deputy director of the base's training. School officials expect about 38,000 students go through training in 2006.

Signs of progress are appearing elsewhere on the base and all construction projects are on schedule, officials said.

Changes will include more than 1,000 new housing units, a watertight basement at the hospital and a possible seawall around the perimeter — designed to alleviate Back Bay flooding.

Hurricane Katrina's storm surge hobbled the hospital's power system and wiped out almost \$30 million of medical equipment.

All new construction at the base will meet new Federal Emergency Management Agency advisory flood elevations.

Officials at the base also have the goal of improving communication systems. Internet phone systems will be installed because they are more reliable and flexible than other systems, said Brig. Gen. James Dougherty, commanding officer at Keesler Medical Center.

Brig. Gen. Paul F. Capasso, Keesler's commanding officer, said the Aug. 29 storm caused about \$950 million in damage, but funding for repairs has come through from both Congress and the Air Force, Capasso said.

"I think that this base has made tremendous progress," Capasso said. "It's because of the great people we have here. The great airmen we have here. Every day, they work 10 or 12 hours and then half of them go home and hang sheet rock downtown because many of them had lost their homes."

Information from The (Biloxi, Miss.) Sun Herald